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SUBJECT: U/SYG HOLMES ON HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN SUDAN  
AND CHAD

¶1. Summary: On December 3, UN Under Secretary General for the Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) John Holmes briefed the Security Council on his recent trip to Chad and Sudan (November 21 - 30). Holmes said that he left Chad with more optimism than expected, but claimed that the situation in Darfur has deteriorated. He touched briefly on Southern Sudan issues, including lack of progress in Abyei and insufficient development aid outside of Juba. The Chadian Perm Rep welcomed normalization of relations with Sudan, and noted that resolving the conflict in Darfur would improve this relationship. Security Council members expressed concern over decreasing access to populations in need and the politicization of camps. End Summary.

Chad

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¶2. Holmes said that the situation of conflict-affected populations in Eastern Chad remained fragile, and he envisioned no immediate large-scale return of refugees to Sudan as long as the conflict in Darfur continues. (Note: According to OCHA estimates, there are currently 263,000 Sudanese refugees in Eastern Chad, 57,000 refugees from the Central African Republic and 180,000 IDPs. End Note.) Holmes expressed greater hope for the return of IDPs, particularly if local reconciliation efforts receive adequate support. According to Holmes, rampant banditry in the region, combined with politicization of IDP camps by rebel groups (particularly the JEM,) contribute to a lack of security. Holmes asserted that the deployment of MINURCAT II and the Chadian police's Integrated Detachment for Security (DIS) would be vital to the protection of all civilians and aid workers in Eastern Chad.

Sudan

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¶3. Holmes observed that, while the humanitarian operation in Darfur is the largest in the world, with an annual budget of \$1 billion, the situation in Darfur continues to deteriorate.

He said that in the first 11 months of 2008, 325,000 individuals were displaced, and growing insecurity and attacks against aid workers have reduced delivery of assistance, forcing some NGOs to close. Holmes described growing frustration among IDPs in camps as the conflict drags on and prospects for return to their homes remain bleak.

¶4. Turning to Abyei, Holmes said that very few IDPs have returned to the town after clashes between security forces belonging to the GoS and the government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) earlier this year. Holmes mentioned progress in a number of areas in Southern Sudan, including the return of 2.4 million IDPs to the south as well as the demining of 12,000 kilometers of roadway. However, Holmes noted that reconstruction primarily has taken place in the capital, Juba, and that the GOSS must allocate resources for the extension of essential services to areas outside of Juba. Holmes concluded by saying he had taken every opportunity in

Sudan to remind the government that it must safeguard humanitarian workers and aid operations regardless of the ICC's decision.

#### Chadian Perm Rep Responds

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¶15. The Chadian Perm Rep stressed that the situation in Chad has improved within the last year, and said that his government would fully cooperate with MINURCAT, noting positive discussions with the UN Secretariat regarding the deployment of MINURCAT II. The Perm Rep further asserted that Sudanese rebel recruitment in refugee camps is not the sole responsibility of Chad, arguing that the international community has not provided any proof that Chad supports these rebels. He concluded by welcoming normalization of relations with Sudan, but indicated that this would be difficult so long as the conflict in Darfur remains unresolved.

#### Security Council Debate

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¶16. All Council members voiced concern over increasing attacks against humanitarian workers. Ambassador DiCarlo asserted that the primary responsibility for protecting both civilians and humanitarian workers lies with the governments of Sudan and Chad, and she called on those governments to prevent future attacks, a call echoed by most other members. Russia asserted that the overall coordination of humanitarian actions is the prerogative of the receiving country's government, underlining that host country sovereignty must always be respected.

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¶17. Regarding the militarization of camps, France made a clarification that was echoed by U/SYG Holmes in his closing remarks: while it is unacceptable for armed groups to recruit within refugee camps, this in no way justifies attacks against these camps, as was the case in Kalma camp. Pointing out the centrality of the peace process to resolving the conflict in Darfur, Libya said that all parties must respond swiftly to peace initiatives and urged rebel factions to participate in the political process. Nearly all members emphasized the importance of normalizing relations between Chad and Sudan for solving the regional crisis. Several countries also called for the speedy deployment of MINURCAT II as critical for the stabilization of Eastern Chad.

Wolff